

SPOONLESS FOOD BOWL

Field of Invention

This invention relates to a vessel for containing food. More particularly, the invention involves tableware for holding pasta. Even more specifically, the invention relates to a bowl having a notch or indentation on the interior surface of the bowl for assisting in the consumption of long strands of pasta, noodles and the like.

Background of the Invention

Despite several thousand years of ceramic design and the manufacture and production of countless manifestations of tableware and utensils used in the consumption and serving of pasta, messy dishes such as spaghetti, linguini, angel hair and other pastas served and prepared with marinara and other sauces still require the use of both hands and the simultaneous use of several eating utensils. For example, when eating spaghetti with marinara sauce, a user holds a spoon in one hand and a fork in the other hand, which twirls the pasta-laden fork against the spoon, creating a small neat "ball" of pasta for consumption. Accordingly, the spoon assists in the winding of the pasta onto a user's fork. Although eating pasta in this manner has been commonplace for quite some time, its disadvantages, including the required use of both hands for eating, are evident.

Further, many consider the use of a spoon when eating pasta to be improper and evidence of bad manners. Accordingly, for those who do not use a spoon because of etiquette concerns or simply to avoid displeasing others, eating pasta has become a more demanding and arduous task for them as well.

One type of bowl specifically designed for eating long pasta is disclosed in WO 01/12030 (Martin). Martin discloses a plate consisting of a base (10) and a rim (14) provided with a cavity (16) for coiling pasta. The cavity (16) is generally round, with a diameter corresponding to that of a tablespoon and is situated in the center of the plate and is raised relative to the base of the plate.

Significantly, the design of the plate disclosed by Martin comprises a raised cavity, forming a double-valley shape. This effectively reduces the overall volume of the plate (relative to a specified depth and diameter) and limits the corresponding amount of pasta that can be held by the plate. Moreover, the raised cavity forces a user to superfluously elevate and lower a fork into the cavity, instead of performing the pasta collection in one fluid action. Further, the orientation of the cavity forces a user to adjust the fork so that it approaches the cavity from above at a generally perpendicular angle. This is relatively uncomfortable and awkward especially when considering that most people who use a spoon when eating pasta prefer to keep the fork generally horizontal.

Brief Description of the Invention

In view of the prior art deficiencies, the principle objective of the present invention is to provide a bowl for eating pasta, noodles and the like, which eliminates the need for use of a spoon.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a pasta bowl having one or more indentations or notches on the interior surface of the bowl, enabling a user to collect pasta, noodles and the like by twirling the fork directly against one or more locations on the interior surface of the bowl.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a pasta bowl that allows for seamless and neat accumulation of pasta on a fork while the fork remains in a natural and generally horizontal orientation.

Another further object of the present invention is to provide tableware that allows for consumption of pasta that is cleaner, efficient, less demanding and more enjoyable.

An even further object of the present invention is to provide a means for compliance with proper etiquette and manners while eating.

In its broadest aspects, the invention is a pasta bowl that effectively eliminates the need for a spoon while eating pasta and the like. Importantly, all of the embodiments of the inventive bowl include one or more notches or indentations which simulate the surface of a spoon when eating pasta.

In a preferred embodiment, the bowl is round and comprises one or more indentations, each being concave and preferably oval to simulate a typical spoon. Eliminating the need for a spoon when eating pasta liberates one hand for other dining tasks and results in a neater, cleaner and more enjoyable dining experience.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the inventive bowl and a user accumulating pasta therein;

FIG. 2 is an front elevational view of an embodiment of the inventive bowl; and

FIG. 3 is a side view of an embodiment of the inventive bowl.

Detailed Description of the Invention

A preferred embodiment of the invention is shown in Figs. 1 through 3 herein.

As shown in Fig. 1, a preferred embodiment of the inventive bowl (10) includes a notch or indentation (12), a base (18) and a lateral surface or wall (16) defined by a rim (14). The bowl (10) may be fabricated by any number of processes known in the art, such as throwing, casting, and pressing, and raw materials may also comprise any number of common substances or combinations thereof which are known in the art for producing tableware including, metals, plastics, clay, china and the like.

The wall (16) of the bowl (10) is generally rounded and forms a traditional slope, while the rim (14) forms a round edge. While the bowl (10) is most commonly round, it may also form other geometric shapes as well. The respective shapes of the wall (16) and rim (14) are not required to correspond to one another. Accordingly, the bowl (10) can form any shape, including but not limited to oval, square, or rectangular, with varying dimensions. The bowl may be decorated in any color and can be glossy, matte, fluted or textured. In addition, the wall may be mostly rounded while the rim forms an oval or squared edge. Further, a bowl may also contain a brim (not shown) of varying sizes, which may add to the bowl's aesthetic appeal to consumers. In addition, the base (18) is

preferably footed and may also incorporate a conventional non-slip surface for better support. The foot can range from a small bump to afford traction and balance to a larger structure.

A preferred embodiment of the bowl (10) has a range of width to depth ratios of approximately 7:1 for a short bowl (10) and approximately 5:4 for a tall bowl (10) and is large enough to accommodate an average to large serving of pasta, depending on the particular dimensions of the bowl (10). While the short and tall bowls (10) preferably have the approximate aspect ratios above of width to depth, the ratios and absolute values of the depth and width may vary between those ranges depending upon the type of bowl (10) which is desired. However, the recommended minimum depth is one inch. The ratio of width to depth may vary to accommodate individual tastes for shallow pasta bowls with a wide base, for restaurant style food presentation, as well as to accommodate a preference for tall pasta bowls, with deep walls and a narrow base, which can hold more food and sauce. The ratios and relative sizes of a bowl embodying the invention may also be altered to accommodate children who typically use smaller bowls or other demographic groups, the members of which require specific accommodations.

As shown in Fig.1, the interior surface of the bowl contains one or more indentation(s) (12) forming a concave surface therein. As shown in Figs. 2 and 3, when viewing the exterior surface of the bowl, the indentation (12) forms a convex surface. Preferably, the indentation (12) is located on the interior surface of the wall (16) in order that a user can hold and twirl a fork (20) at an angle between ten degrees and eighty degrees from horizontal or the plane of the particular surface upon which the bowl is placed, and preferably no more than forty to fifty degrees as shown in Fig. 1. Although the indentation (12) is preferably located on the interior surface of the wall (16), the indentation (12) can also be positioned either where the wall (16) meets the bottom of the bowl (10) or at the bottom of the bowl (10) so long as it allows a fork (20) to approach the indentation (12) at the suitable ten to eighty degree angle.

As an alternative to an indentation (12) which forms a convex surface on the exterior surface of the wall (16), the bowl (10) may instead, or in addition, possess a elevated edge or perimeter located upon the interior surface of the wall (or bottom) of the bowl, forming a crater (not shown) which may be of the general size and shape of a spoon. The bottom of such a crater is also the interior surface of the wall (16). This alternative removes the need for forming a convex surface on the exterior surface of the wall (16) as shown in Figs. 2 and 3, and it may be favored for aesthetic reasons.

While one indentation (12) is enough to accommodate a single user, the bowl (10) may comprise additional indentations (12) to accommodate more than one user simultaneously or to avoid rotating the bowl (10) for more convenient and easier use.

Moreover, a preferred embodiment of the bowl (10) comprises one or more indentations (12) which each can accommodate a wide variety and sizes of table forks, including an appetizer fork, main course fork and dessert fork.

Generally, a preferred embodiment of the bowl (10) is created by "throwing" approximately two to five pounds of high fire stoneware or porcelain or low fire earthenware clay on a potter's wheel or throwing wheel and hand-molding a cylindrically shaped object that is approximately five inches wide by seven inches tall. The sides of the cylinder are then pulled outwardly and upwardly into the form of a traditional pasta bowl that is approximately ten inches wide by five inches tall. Excess wet clay is trimmed away from the bowl (10) and the surfaces of the bowl (10) are smoothed with a sponge.

Preferably, during fabrication, the indentation (12) is approximately twenty percent larger than an average tablespoon to account for shrinkage during the firing process. In addition, the indentation (12) is preferably approximately three-quarters of an inch deep relative to the interior surface of the bowl (10). The indentation (12) is preferably located on a lateral surface (16) such that it remains visible during usage, but it should not be excessively close to the bottom of the bowl where it would interfere with the presentation and consumption of the food,

nor should it be excessively close to the top of the bowl, where it would interfere with rim formation and be difficult to use.

Approximately one hour after shaping the bowl (10), while the clay is still moist and has not yet dried into a leather-hard state, a small round object, such as a smooth stone, is used to rub a single indentation (12) (in this embodiment, the indentation (12) forms a concave surface) into the interior surface of the bowl (10).

The bowl (10) is then dried to a leather-hard state, the rim and sides are trimmed, and a foot is carved from the bowl (10) bottom. After the clay has completely dried it is baked in a kiln at approximately 1800 to 1990 degrees Fahrenheit, preferably 1888 degrees Fahrenheit. A nontoxic food-safe glaze is applied and decorative patterns and designs may be added as well. The bowl is then baked again at approximately 2100 to 2200 degrees Fahrenheit, preferably 2130 degrees Fahrenheit, to create a vitrified stoneware product with a glass-type coating that is waterproof and microwave and dishwasher safe.

The indentation in the final product in all embodiments, after the glaze firing, must be at least one-eighth of an inch deep. The indentation in the final product, after the glaze firing, is generally circular (most commonly round or oval), although indentations having four or more sides can also be made. Additional embodiments may also have a gentle groove leading up to the indentation to accommodate dragging the fork around the bowl and placing it gently into the indentation.

Of course, other methods and processes known in the art for producing bowls, including throwing, casting, and pressing, the molding of plastic or metal or other materials, can be used to manufacture the invention.

The inventive bowl (10) can be used to hold many if not all types of noodles or pasta, including, but not limited to, Italian specialties such as spaghetti, linguini, fettuccine, tagliatelle, as well as Eastern specialties such as lo mein, Japanese soba, or Thai rice noodles.

The inventive bowl (10), including all of its embodiments, eliminates the need to hold a spoon in connection with the consumption of pasta or noodles.